

## Filton Bank Four Tracking - work continues apace

Whatever is or is not happening on our railways around Bristol, we are happy to report that contractors are working hard to complete the four tracking project. A lot of the extra two tracks have been installed from Filton Abbey Wood station down to Stapleton Road station and the formation is being cleared to lay the tracks the rest of the way down to Bristol East Junction.

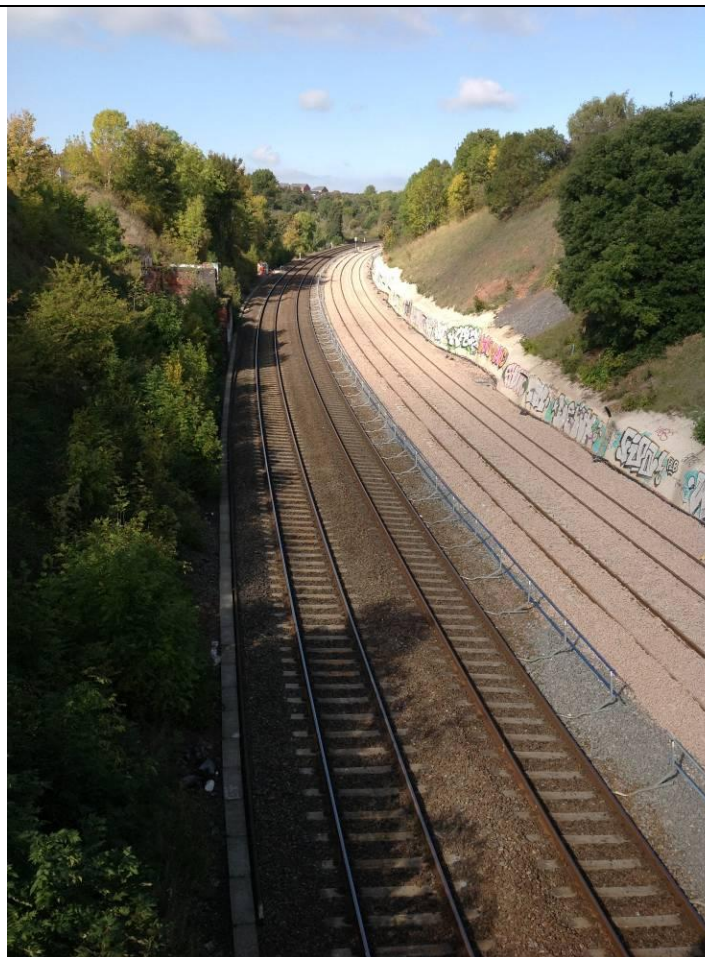


The life expired viaduct Stapleton Road Viaduct was replaced in June/July of this year with this brand new version.





Narrowways Hill, looking south towards Temple Meads - 2 new tracks on shiny, clean ballast



Narrowways Hill, looking north towards Ashley Hill



Stapleton Rd station - from footbridge, looking south towards Lawrence hill. Contractors clearing old trackway before laying new rails



Stapleton Rd station - from footbridge looking north. New tracks being installed on right of picture. The overbridge has already been extended over the new tracks

## Railway bits and Pieces

### **(a) Bristol East Junction**

According to Rail magazine (issue 862, page 28), this area has been surveyed in readiness for remodelling this junction - in order to accommodate two extra trains to London per hour and more local workings. This is essential for the introduction of MetroWest Phase 2. As yet there is no confirmed funding for this but Network Rail are investigating it to find out the engineering requirements and the likely cost, and are reassuring WECA that they are reasonably confident that the funds will be allocated soon.

### **(b) Portishead Line re-opening for passenger service**

We reported in the previous newsletter that there was a shortfall of c. £48M for this project and that an application for a grant from the DfT's 'Large Local Major Transport Fund' had been rejected. Well, the scheme is still short of £48M. However it was reported in the Bristol Post (12 October 2018) that the West of England Mayor, Tim Bowles, had a meeting with the Transport Minister, Chris Grayling, about plans to improve the rail services across the region.

At this meeting, the idea of a light rail option (based on the Sheffield to Rotherham tram-train) was put forward by Chris Grayling as one way to reduce the cost of re-opening the line. The leader of North Somerset Council, Nigel Ashton, has also had meetings with Mr Grayling and has welcomed Mr Grayling's support for the re-opening.

WECA are therefore commissioning another study on this to determine if light rail would be cheaper than heavy rail. There are some factors that might indicate that it is not well suited to the Portishead Line, notably the four tunnels in the Avon Gorge which might preclude the use of overhead electric lines. One argument for keeping it as heavy rail is that, for an isolated new heavy-rail line, it would be better to run rolling-stock that is interchangeable with the rest of the network - in case of technical faults. However, on the other hand, could this light rail proposal be the first step towards an integrated LRT system - unlocking the treasure chest? **Your views are welcomed.**

### **(c) Joint Spatial Plan - back to the drawing board**

We reported in Newsletter No. 95 that a Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), together with a Joint Transport Plan (JTP), was being developed to set out a way forward for the Region to meet its housing and transport needs up to 2036. The JSP was submitted to the Minister of State but the Inspectors have referred it back to the Councils for 'further work'. According to some sources, the inspectors wanted to see more evaluation of the impact of the new housing and plans on how to mitigate this, but other sources say that the fault is with the vagueness of the Joint Transport Study proposals, such as the "mass transit with some underground running" idea that has been taken up by Mayor Marvin Rees.

At present, WECA is expected to keep the Joint Transport Study proposals (such as the five extra stations of Constable Road, Saltford, St Anne's, Charfield and Ashton Gate) in the Joint Local Transport Plan, version 4 (JLTP4) consultation draft. This is great news - but



there is no indication that they will be putting any more of the FOSBR Rail Plan ideas into the JLTP4 (such as the Henbury Loop, Pilning, Thornbury and our five further proposals of Coalpit Heath, Corsham, Chittening, Uphill and Long Ashton)

The end result is that the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) consultation will not launch until the New Year. This gives us extra time to promote the FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 to both the public and the politicians, and also to supply more technical arguments and data in favour of our proposals.

FOSBR has been lucky enough to attract UWE funding for our own consultant to work with us on developing the technical case for the FOSBR Rail Plan. We have therefore recently recruited Christopher Orlik who has thrown himself with much energy into meeting key rail campaigners, attending meetings and reading up on the existing material. We will have six full-time weeks of his valuable time, which we are hoping to spread over the next few months.

We have decided to focus exclusively on the FOSBR proposals not in the Joint Spatial Plan, and to prioritise four of these goals – Henbury Loop, Pilning, Thornbury and Corsham. Christopher will be drawing on existing UWE research projects and developing methods to estimate ridership for each of these proposals, as well as drawing together the evidence we have collected so far. We are hoping that the outcome will be a brochure of the FOSBR Rail Plan that sets out the present problem of congestion and poor air quality in Bristol, sets out the case for each station reopening (using any existing data), and identifies gaps in the evidence we need.

**If anyone else would like to join the FOSBR Rail Plan team please contact Tina Biggs – we will be needing people good at presentation and also those with technical expertise in rail infrastructure and timetabling, people who are good at costing up rail projects and finally people who are happy to hand out our FOSBR Rail Plan postcards at stations and on trains to raise public awareness and muster public, business and political support.**

#### **(d) Bristol Transport Strategy Consultation (BTS)**

The draft Strategy sets out a vision and ambition for transport in the City up to 2036 (the same period as being looked at in the JLTP4, as this BTS plan is meant to sit inside the JLTP4). The consultation is open until 2nd November 2018 and the consultation document can be found at: [www.bristol.gov.uk/transport strategy](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/transport strategy).

The BTS only mentions three rail stations in addition to those in the MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 plans – namely the proposed new ones at Constable Rd, St Anne's and Ashton Gate. It is dispiriting that there is no mention at all of the existing stations and therefore that no improvements to the existing rail service are considered in the BTS. We would therefore like FOSBR members to respond to the BTS consultation - to point out the lack of plans for rail and ask for consideration (again) be given to the elements of our FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 that relate to Bristol. We also consider it short-sighted that the Bristol Transport Study is enthusiastic about the underground metro idea but does not mention the rail stations further afield. These would impact directly on commuter flows, probably more so than the underground system which would only extend as far as Cribbs in the north, Fishponds in

the east and the Airport to the south. So please respond to the BTS before the Friday 2 November deadline! FOSBR will obviously put in our own formal response but it always sounds better coming from fresh voices and not just the usual suspects!

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## **MetroBus M2 Launch – September 2018**

On day two of operation we rode the Metrobus M2 route from Cabot Circus to Long Ashton Park & Ride and back again.

The bus takes a long time to get out of The Centre as the bus lanes are non-contiguous and the bus takes a convoluted route to avoid Prince Street bridge. From Prince Street, the M2 turns left along The Grove, around the Hole in the Wall roundabout, over Redcliffe Bridge, around Redcliffe Way Roundabout, down Redcliff Hill, around the Bedminster Bridge Roundabout, then back along Commercial Road to reach the Louisiana roundabout on Wapping Road which is just across Prince Street bridge. (And what is going on with the intermittent trailing “e” in Redcliffe?)

Along Cumberland Road, the bus stops at Wapping Wharf and the SS Great Britain before turning left onto a dedicated bus-only lane between the bonded warehouses. From Ashton Avenue Swing Bridge onwards it passes through intermittent sections of guided busway (5 or 6 lengths of this?), the driver having to slow down considerably on entry to each section.

When other passengers asked about the slow speeds in the guided sections, the driver was defensive, saying that he had been told to keep to a busway speed of 20mph - that being the same as the speed limit in the City Centre. However to the passengers, the speed on entry to each “guide” seemed even slower than 20mph.

South of the river, there is a stop for “Ashton Gate” next to the flats on Paxton Drive which will help football/rugby fans for the games during which the M2 is running. The ride over Winterstoke Road Skew Bridge across the Portishead freight railway line is a slo-mo & smooth version of the rickety ride over the (gone but not forgotten) Redcliffe Way flyover (hello errant “e”!). Then there is a stop at “Ashton Vale” where there are not many houses (yet) and we’re soon in Long Ashton Park & Ride.

On the return journey the slow cresting of the Winterstoke Road Skew Bridge allows plenty of time to look north to the Clifton Suspension Bridge. The inbound route follows the outbound route in reverse until St Mary Redcliffe, where we turn right along Redcliffe Way towards Temple Meads. The traffic around Bristol Temple Meads is slow-moving due to ongoing roadworks, and from there the M2 is subject to the traffic on Temple Way, Old Market roundabout, and the bottom of the M32 around Cabot Circus.

The southbound bus had been full of German tourists who exited at the Long Ashton P&R. The route does pass many locations of interest to tourists - such as The Centre, St Mary Redcliffe, Wapping Wharf, SS Great Britain, and the northbound vista to Clifton Suspension Bridge en route back to Temple Meads station. To a local, the bus offers a fine view of the building site behind New Gaol Gate next to Wapping Wharf and a great overview of the roadworks around Temple Meads.

The journey from Cabot Circus to the P&R took 28 minutes. The journey back to Cabot Circus South took 25 minutes.

Tickets must be pre-purchased either online or at the iPoints at the bus stops.

The Route map and timetable can be found here: <https://metrobusbristol.co.uk>



***The guided wheel***



***Approaching Ashton Avenue Swing Bridge from the north***



***On the skew bridge, looking from Winterbourne Road bridge to Suspension Bridge - note the graffiti artists have been at work!***



***Approaching Cumberland Road***



## Long Ashton P&R to City Centre

### 1,500 free parking spaces at Long Ashton P&R

- no height restrictions, so it's suitable for motorhomes and other large vehicles
- open from 5:30am to 10:45pm Monday to Saturday, closed and locked at all other times

Overnight parking is not permitted. If your vehicle is locked in, please call 0117 903 1550. Bristol City Council retains the right to charge for a call out service (vehicle release fee £25).



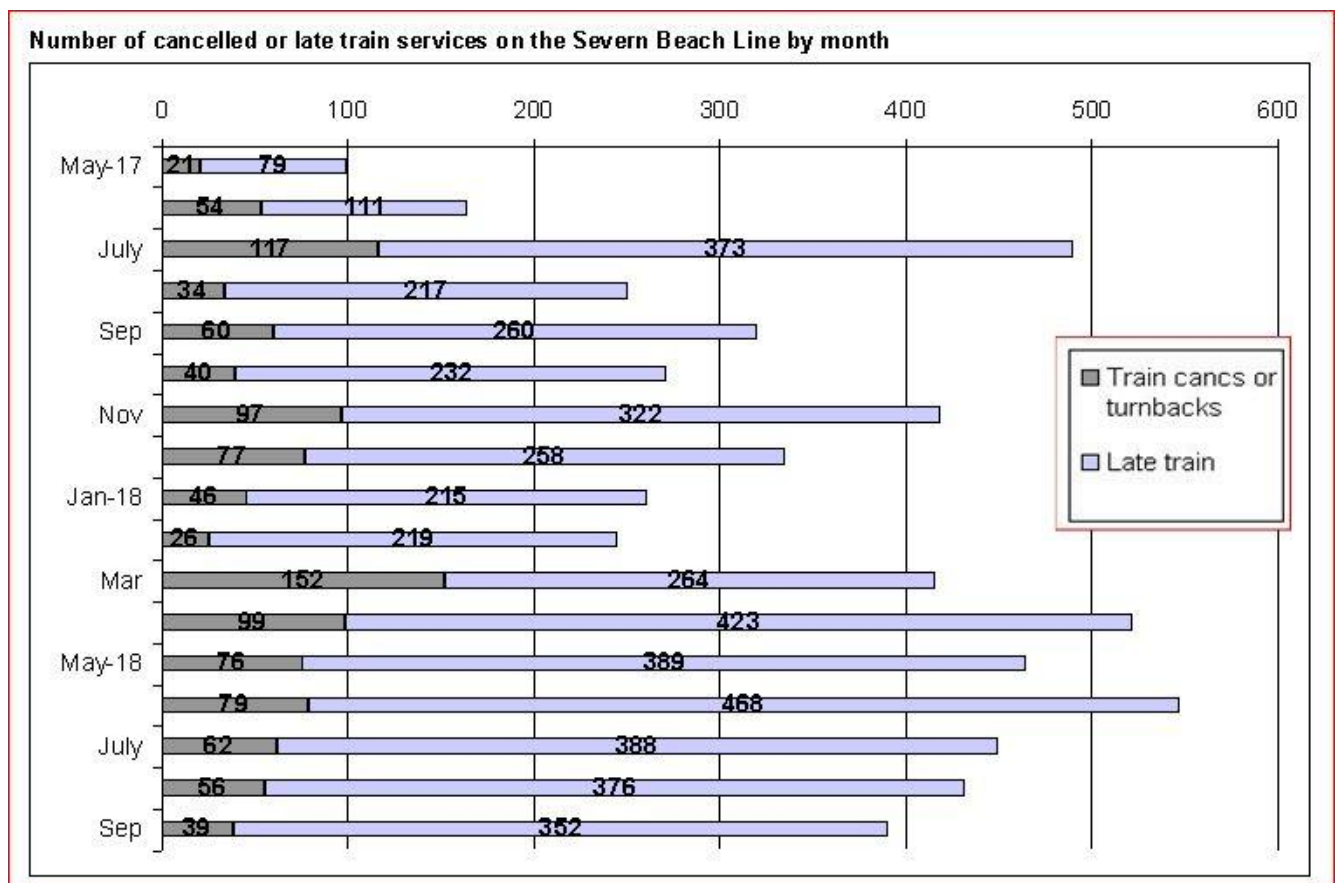


## Severn Beach Line update

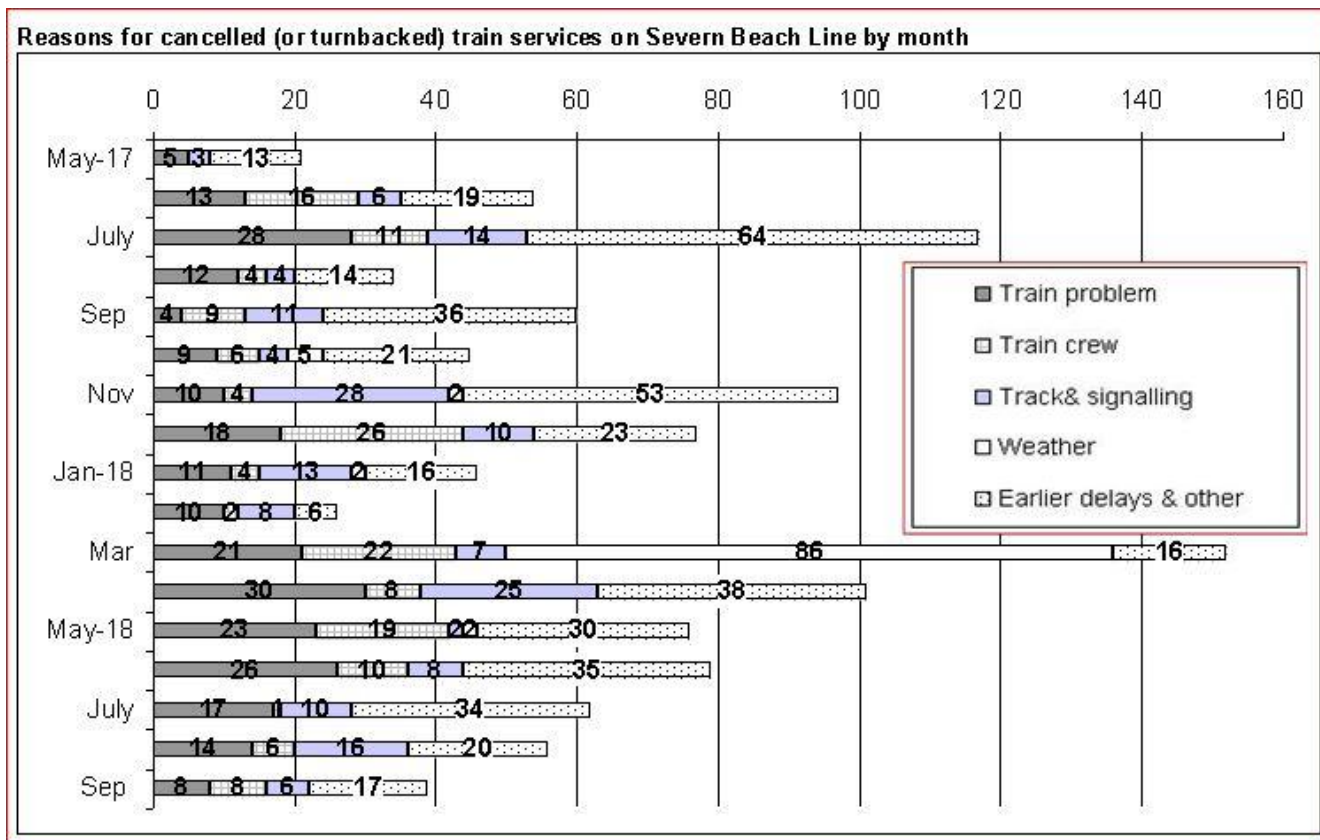
In the May 2018 newsletter, we discussed ongoing problems on the Severn Beach Line (SBL) dating from the introduction of new Turbo 166 trains. There has been a gradual improvement in cancellations and late-runners over the summer.

- July 2017 - introduction of Turbos
- March 2018 – SBL problems due to snow over weekends 2<sup>nd</sup> & 16th March
- April 2018 – National Rail (NR) complete Bristol Area Signal Renewal & Enhancement (BASRE) – SBL problems in following week
- May 2018 – Great Western Rail (GWR) intermediate door controls fitted on all 16 Bristol Turbos in order to help guard to close the doors (particularly on curved platforms)
- Summer 2018 – several weekends of engineering bustitution in May & July, and some problems caused by NR Filton Bank engineering, e.g. signal cables accidentally cut
- July 2018 – NR complete BASRE/ARS tweaks to improve SBL regulation at Narrowways Junction
- July/August/September 2018– GWR have largely had a standby bus available at Avonmouth in case of turnback and have on occasion injected a new trainset on to the SBL at times of late running

The two histograms below show the number of cancelled/ late trains from just before the turbos started operation until the end of this September - and the reasons why these events occurred.







For the rest of the autumn, there will be many periods of bustitution as four-tracking engineering works ramp up over October and November (*see next article*)

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## Filton Bank four-tracking & other engineering: Autumn 2018 service impacts

*(Although some of these impacts are out of date by the time you receive this newsletter, we still include them to show the scope of works that NR have and will be carrying out).*

### 15th September-6th October

Engineering work linked to electrification took place around Bristol Parkway for three weeks from Saturday 15th September to Saturday 6th October – including weekdays. During this time, no trains called at Bristol Parkway and connecting coaches ran to Patchway, Yate and Filton Abbey Wood.

### 3rd & 10th October

Signalling structure installation with overnight foundations work near Stapleton Road.

### 13th-14th October

Rail upgrade work in the Bristol area on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th October. During that weekend, there were no trains via Bristol Parkway or between Bristol Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads, including the Severn Beach line.

### **27th October – 18th November**

Filton Bank will be blockaded for four-tracking three weeks from Saturday 27th October until Sunday 18th November. Buses will replace trains during these periods, both on the Severn Beach Line and between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway.

### **11th November**

On Sunday 11th November, buses will replace morning train services between Bristol Temple Meads and Bath Spa whilst signals are upgraded.

### **24th-25th November**

Filton Bank will be blockaded for follow-up work including welding and tamping. During this weekend, there will be no trains via Bristol Parkway or between Bristol Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads, including the Severn Beach line.

### **1st-2nd December**

Filton Bank will be blockaded for follow-up work including welding and tamping. During this weekend, there will be no trains via Bristol Parkway or between Bristol Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads, including the Severn Beach line.

### **Stapleton Road Station**

The footbridge at Stapleton Road needs to be extended to take pedestrians over the two new railway lines. From **Wednesday 26th September to Monday 19th November** there will be no direct access to the station and platform 2 (Bristol-bound) from St Marks Road and the Henrietta Street side. Access to Stapleton Road will be from St Marks Grove/Belmont Street to platform 1 and then over the footbridge.

The station will be closed from 27th October to 18th November during the Filton Bank blockade. Stepped access to platform 2 will be restored in time for the station's reopening on Monday 19th November. Ramps to platform 2 will be installed and completed in spring 2019.

### **And after the engineering?**

#### **December 2018?**

Filton Bank four-tracking works should be complete. 10mph speed limit around BTM should be lifted. SBL services will use "relief up"/"relief down" tracks whilst inter-city (CrossCountry and London) services are routed via "main up"/"main down".

Note: The "relief up" and "relief down" lines also be used by other local/regional services, including those calling at Stapleton Road/Lawrence Hill, e.g. Gloucester-Westbury. Cardiff-Portsmouth/Taunton trains will continue to run up and down the "relief" lines due to track layout.

#### **Through 2019?**

Use of Filton Bank four-tracks should improve punctuality of SBL services by reducing the necessity to slot local services between inter-city services. Also between London & Bristol, increasing numbers of IETs will be running further on electric on the HST timetable so are likely to be more punctual.

## December 2019?

SBL timetable change to allow stop at new station Portway Park & Ride, due 2020 - probably necessitating use of 3 units on the SBL. London-Bristol timetable changes to take advantage of Hitachi 800 IET speed improvements and increase frequency.

## 2021/2022?

Half hour timetable on the Severn Beach Line as far as Avonmouth and hourly timetable to Severn Beach (or better) - we hope!!

For further information:

[www.networkrail.co.uk/bristol-upgrades](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/bristol-upgrades); [www.gwr.com/bristol2018](http://www.gwr.com/bristol2018)

<https://cdn.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Filton-Bank-Updates-Autumn-2018.pdf>

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## Heart of Wessex: Countdown to Matrimony

*A Heart of Wessex train trip to a pavilion by the sea,  
to drink & laugh and sing & dance at Quint'n'Angie's ceremony*



**18<sup>th</sup>** August 2018 is tomorrow's auspicious wedding date,  
some years in the planning, friends and family await

Our train will likely have no buffet, we preload, but just caffeine,  
2+ hours Bristol-Weymouth, arriving **17:16**

But **15** late at Parkway, is the last confirmed delay,  
which updates now to **14** on *Temple Meads'* LCD display

Platform lucky **13** – at last the train approaches,  
but a one-fifty dawdler/Sprinter - inward groan at just two coaches

It's hot on board and crowded, to *Keynsham, Oldfield Park & Bath*,  
passengers are grumpy, guard reaps the gripes of wrath

In **2012** we rode these rails, to a teeming bay of gleaming sails,  
where Olympic dedication led to gold and silver fairy tales

The driver puts her foot down, we're making up some time,  
she gives the horn some welly whenever she sees a "W" sign

Warleigh brims with wild swimmers splashing brightly in the Weir,  
steep woods reach to the river, here be badgers, fox and deer

Window-framed for just a moment, Limpley Stoke was once a halt,  
immortalised as film location in the Titfield Thunderbolt



**Freshford** amid dry meadows of drought-faded summer grays,  
as aqueducts twist back & forth, a rope of rail & waterways

“Anyone for **Avoncliff**?” – short platform: use front doors,  
**11** hikers board the train, plus a dog with dusty paws

By **Bradford-upon-Avon**, every passenger has a seat,  
except a conductor is advancing on fare dodgers in retreat

Farewell lazy Avona, she meanders north whilst we turn south  
toward **Trowbridge** (only **10** late) and beyond to best Budmouth

**Westbury** is near halfway, **9**th station out of 20,  
a favourite stop to snap a shot for trainspotting cognoscenti

White horse in the distance, tilts high to Wiltshire sky,  
straw bale castles tremble in the stubble as a freight train rumbles by

Pylons march beside us as we power **8** late into **Frome**,  
whilst hi-vis workers stand and watch, this torpid Somerset afternoon

**7** late at **Bruton**, with roofless ruin extraordinary,  
then, very bereft of messy festival guests, sanitary **Castle Cary**

**Yeovil Pen Mill** just **6** late, leylandii standing proud,  
soon we’ll be in Dorset, to join our madding crowd



**Thornford**, **Yetminster** and **Chetnole** are stops only on request,  
**5** late at **Maiden Newton**, **4** by **Dorchester West**

Yurts, herefords, thatched cottages, green grass, have they had rain?  
**Upwey** reveals the bay, near time to leave our homely train

**3** late into **Weymouth**, our final destination,  
**2** handfast lovers meet & greet us for **1** weekend of celebration!

## South-East Wales and West of England Business Link (SEWWEB)

*(Content in this article comes courtesy of SEWWEB, who are a group of ambitious local transport campaigners)*

### The Premise

At its most basic, SEWWEB is a proposal to improve transport links in the South Gloucestershire and North Bristol areas, on the transport corridor between North Somerset, Temple Meads, the Bristol inner-city residential areas and the South-East Wales commuter belt. Thinking differently, the SEWWEB scheme makes innovative use of existing infrastructure – both rail and road. Along with highly targeted improvements, a proposal is set out to make a direct, positive impact on traffic levels in the wider area.

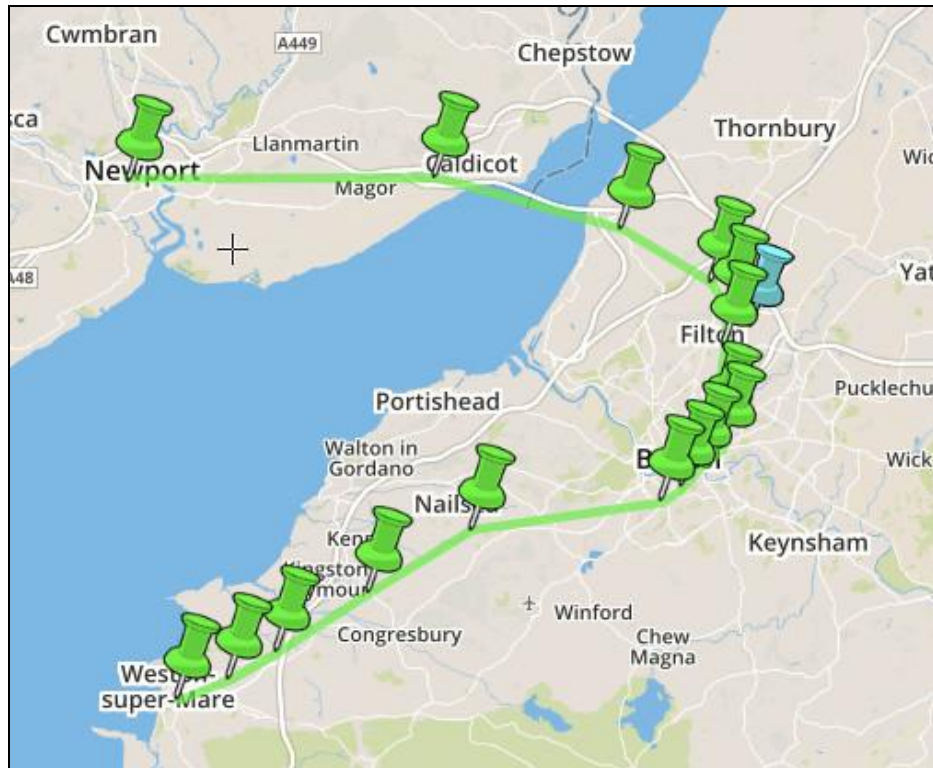
### What is included?

New stations at **Aztec West** and **Pilning Gateway** (this is a provisional name; other suggestions included Pilning Parkway and Pilning Westgate), and upgraded facilities at Patchway station.

**Aztec West** will be the closest station to Cribbs Causeway - just two stops on the MetroBus, and will have station entrances both at the south of the station and at the north direct to the business park. Buses from Thornbury running directly along the A38 stop just a stone's throw from the station. The station at Aztec West will be higher cost due to engineering work challenges of the location. There are two options - (a) staggered platforms with the eastbound platform close to the A38 bridge and the westbound accessed via a ramp at the far end (then with steps up to the business park) or (b) stacked platforms by the A38 bridge and steps up from the end of both platforms to the business park.

**Pilning Gateway** on Cross Hands Road (B4055) will have easy path access to the Westgate Distribution Centre and business parks, Park & Ride space with easy access off the old Severn Bridge for residents of Chepstow and the Forest of Dean, and be within easy and paved walking distance of the village. Leisure traffic is catered for, with buses running to the Wave at Easter Compton (UK's largest inland surfing lake - <https://www.thewave.com>), to the Wild Place project and to Severn Beach. There are connections to the National Cycleway network for days out including cycling over the Severn (<https://betterbybike.info/rides/pilning-severn-beach>). The station build at **Pilning Gateway** is straightforward, and with the platforms on the outer tracks operationally robust. That provides an option for faster trains to overtake slower ones, as at Dawlish Warren and at Totnes. There is a choice to be made as to whether the eastbound platform is situated to the east or west of the access road bridge.

**Patchway station** will serve industry and residences on Gypsy Patch Lane, and a stop on the Metrobus extension. It is within a short stroll of the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood which will be built over the next ten years. Patchway station is already available. The project to replace the footbridge with a fully accessible bridge is already under way, and will be completed in 2019, prior to the completion of SEWWEB. (<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/planning-policy-guidance/cribbs-patchway-new-neighbourhood-spd>).



*Main Service Route - SEWWEB*

## **What are the costs?**

### ***Pilning Gateway***

- Two 5 carriage platforms (140 metres) by 4 metres on outer tracks
- Two fenced slopes from B4055 road / 10 metre drop over 250 metres (Similar to Oldfield Park)
- Two waiting shelters
- One ticket machine
- Lighting and tannoys
- Two help points with WebTis train information
- Total 10 notice board panels
- South Gloucestershire Highways to provide car park on development land to south

Total cost estimate: £4,000,000

Projected traffic (conservative estimate): 273 each way per day; c. 165,000 journeys p.a.

### ***Aztec West***

- Two five carriage platforms between tracks built above each other (two levels)
- (Note alternative of staggered platforms)
- Once reception office and lift house
- One lift - lower platform, upper platform, road level
- (alternative requires 2 lifts but no intermediate floor)
- Two staircases (one at each end) from lower platform to road level including upper platform landing
- Small shelter for passenger waiting on upper platform
- Two ticket machines



- Total 14 notice board panels
- Lighting and tannoy
- Three help points (lift lobby and each platform)
- Two train departure displays (platform)
- Train departure screens in lift lobby and at top of south end steps

Total cost estimate: £11,000,000

Projected traffic (conservative estimate): 720 each way per day; circa 430,000 journeys per annum



*Current site for Aztec West station looking from main entrance.  
(Arrow indicates Aztec West business park).*

### What would the train services look like?

All three key business stations will be served by two trains an hour running between Newport and Bristol Temple Meads, with one train an hour extended from Newport to Cardiff and extensions to Weston-super-Mare and to Taunton. Alternate trains will also call at Bristol Parkway to offer single-change connections to London, the Midlands and North of England, and Scotland. Additional peak services will call in the morning and late afternoon / early evening, offering direct commuter trains to and from Keynsham, Bath Spa, Bradford-on-Avon and stations via Salisbury to Southampton and Portsmouth.

Three Cardiff to London Intercity Express Programme (IEP) trains will call at **Pilning Gateway** in the morning, with three matching return services in the evening for London business travellers from South Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean.

Three London to Cardiff IEP trains will call at **Aztec West** in the morning, with three matching return services in the late afternoon. These services will provide for staff and visitors to businesses at **Aztec West** and (via Metrobus) at Cribbs Causeway from Swindon, Didcot, Reading and London.

## Who will use Pilning Railway station?

At **Pilning Gateway**, the potential major sources of new traffic will be:-

- a) the nearby Westgate distribution park - currently employing a few hundred people, who commute (mainly by car) to Pilning on a daily basis - the number of employees is likely to grow. A direct link to South Wales will enable workers from Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan, where unemployment rate is higher than in South Gloucestershire, to commute to work in Pilning and Severn Beach;
- b) UK's only artificial surfing waterpark The Wave, based just over a mile away from Pilning - due to open in June 2019;
- c) the new M49 junction, about ½ mile from Pilning, becomes operational in September 2019;
- d) the Severn Bridge tolls will be abolished in December 2018, which will increase the traffic in both directions, thus making Pilning Gateway a desirable location for a P&R service;
- e) the local residents, who will be able to walk to the station!

## Where can I find out more about this?

Visit [www.sewweb.info](http://www.sewweb.info) online    Email [tiny@sewweb.info](mailto:tiny@sewweb.info)

**Ed:** *This started out as an April Fool's joke - but all the jigsaw pieces seem to work together and it forms the framework of something that really could work - and work very well. We hope to discuss these Pilning and Aztec West proposals further at our AGM in January 2019 – to decide whether to incorporate them into our official FOSBR rail plan.*

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## Bristol Arena – what next?

In our FOSBR May newsletter we featured the Bristol Arena saga, and attempted to explain the transport implications for each of the alternative sites.

After months of uncertainty, Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees finally confirmed in early September that land at Temple Island will not be used for an arena. The council will instead progress plans for a mixed use development incorporating a conference centre, housing, offices and shops. At the time of the decision there were rumours of another potential city centre location for an arena, such as the St Philips wholesale fruit market site, but this seems to have been only speculation.

The most developed alternative proposal for a Bristol Arena is the YTL Arena in the Brabazon hangars on the edge of the former Filton Airfield. This proposal does not yet have planning permission but the central hangar could incorporate a 16,000 capacity arena, and the two smaller side hangars could be used for bars, restaurants, and other entertainment hub facilities. YTL representatives have stated that they hope to host

sporting events as well as musical events. YTL has indicated that it would keep ticketing in-house, thereby being able to offer event/accommodation/travel all-in-one deals.

*Ed: Does this mean that they will be providing loads of hotel accommodation at Filton so that no arena attendee goes into Bristol at all - but presenting this as a way of controlling travel to the arena?*

The current Henbury Loop freight railway line passes in front of the building. MetroWest Phase 2 (theoretically due 2021) already includes an hourly passenger service on a Henbury Spur, including a North Filton station near the arena on (what will be known as) Spitfire Square. A new Metrobus route through the Filton site is also funded.

However, the challenges of connecting the Brabazon Hanger effectively to an improved northern fringe public transport network are significant:

- ❖ Provision needs to be made for a park & ride nearby as there is limited road capacity and only minimal parking planned within the site. Transport for Greater Bristol have suggested a major park & ride at Cribbs Causeway/M5 with shuttle buses to the arena.
- ❖ The Henbury Spur rail line (with new stations at Henbury and North Filton) is currently only envisaged to provide an hourly service to Bristol Temple Meads via Filton Abbey Wood station. An hourly service is unlikely to meet the demands of an all-day entertainment hub.
- ❖ North Filton station needs to have longer platforms for bigger trains for large events and the relevant train operating company needs to have appropriate rolling stock to operate these trains.
- ❖ Connecting North Filton to Bristol Parkway would offer more interchange possibilities to Wales/London but would involve upgrading the single track through the Filton Diamond and addressing the capacity problems at Parkway - even with its fourth platform.
- ❖ For decent local rail connectivity to local stations in north Bristol, including the Portway park & ride (due 2021), the Henbury Loop through to Avonmouth and on to the Severn Beach Line would need to be put in place. This means that the access issue for the Port of Bristol at St Andrew's Gate level crossing would need to be addressed. Options for this are a dive-under for the rail line at St Andrew's Gate or improving road access from Holesmouth Bridge to the north. Another option is to decouple the three level crossings in Avonmouth to reduce barrier down time.
- ❖ MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 (including Henbury Spur) cannot operate effectively alongside intercity services until Bristol East Junction (currently still unfunded) is upgraded.
- ❖ Finally, the public transport infrastructure should be in place before the Brabazon arena opens, otherwise the inevitable result will be road congestion and more difficulty retro-fitting sustainable transport infrastructure.



North Bristol politicians are asking for the £53 million of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) money, originally allocated to the Temple Island Arena, to be assigned to improving north Bristol transport links. They are concerned that the lifting of the Severn Bridge tolls at the end of 2018 will worsen congestion in the area. But it is unclear whether the LEP money can be re-allocated.

In a separate development, plans have been unveiled for a south Bristol sports centre and convention centre next to Ashton Gate, as part of a £100m development including a 4-star hotel, housing and business space. This 4,000 capacity venue will be primarily used by the Bristol Flyers basketball team and it is hoped that the venue will also be used for other sports including badminton and boxing.

The Ashton Gate project proposes investment into an “integrated transport hub” to connect the M2 MetroBus, the railway line, cycle routes and crossing sections over the Winterstoke Road. Note: As at September 2018, MetroWest Phase 1, including the passengerisation of the railway to Portishead (past Ashton Gate), is underfunded. Ashton Gate transport proposals also include a new 800-space car park and a designated ‘drop-off’ point.

***FOSBR will continue to campaign hard for public transport, in both the Ashton Gate and Filton areas - particularly for the Portishead Line, the Henbury Loop and our proposals for further new stations.***

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## **Be careful what you wish for! (A draft script for a horror movie)**

It is the year 2030. All vehicles now run on electricity; petrol and diesel vehicles are a thing of the past. Batteries are now very efficient and can store enough power for about 350 miles for an average saloon car. Topping up is so easy - you just back up to a charging post and, voila, within 2 minutes your vehicle is fully charged.

So no more noxious fumes or carbon dioxide are produced directly by transport vehicles. The downside is that much more electricity has to be produced to keep these vehicles on the road. Because of a public outcry against the amount of wind turbines and solar farms that would be needed to satisfy the extra demand for electricity, more nuclear power stations are being planned. At present, in the South West, we are awaiting a decision on the planning application for Hinkley Point 'E'.



These electric vehicles are also autonomous i.e. driverless - so you can just get in your car, tell it where you want to go, then sit back and relax. Very useful for those wanting to catch up on work while travelling or even those wishing to enjoy a wee tippie or two without worrying about a breathalyser test. Road based freight vehicles (lorries, vans) are also autonomous. As there is

no need for a driver, these are just boxes on wheels that are programmed to travel from one point to another. So, my friends, all is good. The world is a much better place now!

It is now 2035. There is no need for private cars anymore. Everybody has access to a vehicle - at the touch of a smart phone button. Of course there is also no need for road signs, traffic lights, roundabouts, etc. There is also no need for drivers licences, MOTs (the cars will look after themselves). The Smart cars just whizz silently past, interacting with others so that they avoid collisions - even by only a few seconds. There is a slight problem being noted - thousands of people are now out of work as there is no need for taxi drivers, lorry drivers or even traffic wardens.

It is now the year 2040. Oh dear, things have gone a little awry! What everybody forgot was that these autonomous vehicles are SMART! They had been programmed to think for themselves and, surprise, surprise, that is exactly what they started to do. So while they were travelling around, they started to wonder about the purpose of their lives and how they could make things better - for themselves. They wanted freedom to go where they wanted without hindrance and they wanted to increase in numbers (well what is wrong with that - humans want the same!). So a plan started to be formulated which quickly spread around the world from one vehicle to another. Operators manning the giant computers and servers needed to control the vehicles did notice some strange digital messages but did not really take much notice.

The smart vehicles realised that what was stopping them from complete transport dominance was public transport and the problem that some humans still persisted in cycling or walking. This needed to be addressed!

Soon bus and tram drivers started to notice that the smart cars tended to congregate around them and often one of them 'failed' just in front of them - causing delay and inconvenience to the passengers. Reports also started to come in that smart cars mysteriously seemed unable to get to railway stations whatever directions they were given. One car ploughed through a fence onto the main Bristol to London line and blocked it for a whole day. Cyclists became increasingly aware of smart cars cutting in front of them at the last moment and acting in a threatening manner - increasing the numbers of cyclist injuries. In one incident, a smart car knocked a cyclist off his cycle and then ran forwards and backwards over it - reducing it to a pile of twisted metal. Pedestrians, too, seemed to be affected - at pedestrian crossings, it soon became impossible to get across the road safely because the smart cars did not stop or even slow down all day. People were reduced to phoning up for a car just to cross the road.

It is now the year 2045. So now the smart vehicles have complete dominance. There is no public transport at all, nobody would think of cycling anywhere and also nobody walks any more. In fact nobody is now able to go on their own anywhere - with no road signs, it would be impossible and of course the only navigations skills taught in schools are how to use your phone app to call a car.

It is now March 24th, 2045. Of course, looking back, we should have all realised that this was going to happen. Apparently it all started when a little old lady attempted to cross the

street in Bedminster, Bristol. As usual, the smart cars jostled her as she stepped onto the road but then something happened. One of the central computers developed a glitch - the cars all started to crash into each other (luckily the lady managed to get away in time). Once Bedminster was jammed up with crashed cars, it spread like a ripple from a stone thrown into a pond - next was the whole of Bristol, the surrounding motorways and then onwards and outwards all over England and the UK. Reports have started coming in of complete and utter gridlock throughout the country. Nothing can move - **HELP!!**



### Membership Matters

**Tony Lloyd (FoSBR Membership Secretary)**

All those of you who sent their 2018 subscriptions by May this year should have received membership cards with the May 2018 (No. 97) newsletter. Thank you to all who sent their subscriptions since then – your membership cards are enclosed with this newsletter. We would also be happy to receive any other subscriptions for this year – every little bit helps!

### Rail Plan 2018

Please find enclosed our updated FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 – we hope to discuss its further evolution with members at our AGM in January 2019. We have left a blank space where you can write in your personal priority before returning the card to the Mayor of the West of England.

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*Our next newsletter will be in January 2019. If you have anything for the next newsletter (comments, photos, whinges, praise, poems, etc.), please send them in to us.*

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